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homemakers' chat
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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Wednesday, October 27, 1943

SUBJECT: "PEANUTS" Information from Food Distribution officials of the U. S. Department of Agriculture.

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When is a nut not a nut? When It's a peanut! For the peanut is not a nut at all...it's a vegetable, and close relative of the pea and bean. And since we can use them as both vegetable and nut, peanuts are a versatile food.

The so-called "nuts" grow below the ground...but not on the roots of the plant. The plant looks much like the green pea vine you grew in your garden last summer. It has a lovely yellow blossom on a long stem. The base of the blossom finally swells...the blossom drops...the long stem droops and thrusts its big tip into the soil...and the peanut pod forms on the tip, under the earth. We harvest the pods...dry, roast, and shell them...and end up with the familiar peanut kernel...plain salted, or crushed to peanut butter, or processed for use in cooking as peanut oil or peanut flour. And, of course, it has important industrial uses.

This year we're going to have a lot of peanuts. The peanut crop will probably be about 25% bigger than last year...and more than double the average from 1932 to 1941. Civilians may have more peanuts and peanut products than they had in 1942...the increased production will take care of the needs of industry, the armed forces, and our allies.

Remember how you used to think of peanuts as an "extra" food...like candy... something to nibble at in the morning or afternoon or...something to put in the middle of the party table for your guests?

Now, more people are featuring peanuts as part of the meal. Here's why. Peanuts are a good food for protein...and protein is an important body-building material. You can also count on peanuts for 3 important B-vitamins. You need the

B-vitamins for steady nerves, good appetite, and general wellbeing. On top of all this...peanuts give some minerals and are a good source of fat. Peanuts take their place in group of Basic Seven foods along with dry beans and peas and soybeans. So if you learn to use peanuts in soups, salads, main dishes, or desserts, you'll get lots of food value for your money.

One of the best ways to use peanuts is to help stretch your meat supply. You can use peanuts now and again as a meat alternate, and that's why they're listed along with meats. Try them in nut loaves...croquettes...poultry stuffing. Here is how to make a delicious peanut and carrot loaf:

Take 2 tablespoons fat...3 tablespoons flour...one and a half cups cooked tomatoes, juice and pulp...and make a thick sauce. Mix well with 2 cups chopped roasted peanuts...2 cups chopped carrots...one cup dry bread crumbs...one-fourth cup finely chopped parsley...one and a half teaspoons salt...and one-eighth teaspoons salt...and one-eighth teaspoon pepper. Form into a loaf. Pack tightly into a well-greased loaf pan lined with paper...bake in a moderately hot oven — 375°-400°F. — for one hour.

And don't forget that <u>cream of peanut butter soup</u> is a hearty dish with a new flavor for brisk fall days. You need a quart of milk...2 slices onion...2 tablespoons flour...one-half cup peanut butter...one-half teaspoon salt...a few drops of tabasco sauce and some finely chopped parsley. Heat 3 and a half cups of the milk in a double boiler with the onion. Blend the flour and the remaining cold milk...add to the hot milk, cook, and stir until thickened. Mix the peanut butter with some of the hot sauce and add to the remainder in the double boiler. Season to taste with salt and a few drops of tabasco sauce. Remove the onion before serving, and stir in the finely chopped parsley.

And you can also add nourishment and a new taste to salads with chopped peanuts or a peanut butter salad dressing. Of course peanut butter sandwiches on enriched bread belong in the lunchbox...and peanuts or peanut butter combine well with any number of other foods for a sandwich spread.

Peanut butter can often be used for part of the fat in baking...and that's good news to homemakers who've been using fats sparingly. This unrationed food is good in frostings, biscuits, cakes...Try this recipe for peanut butter drop cookies...you don't need any other fat:

Take one-half cup peanut butter...one-half cup sugar...1 egg...1 cup sifted flour...2 teaspoons baking powder...one-fourth teaspoon salt... and one-half cup milk. Mix the peanut butter, sugar and beaten egg. Sift together the dry ingredients and add alternately with the milk to the first mixture. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto a greased baking sheet about an inch apart. Bake in a moderate oven -- 350°F. -- about 15 minutes, or until lightly browned. And fill your cooky jar...the children will love them.

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